

The Pulse

News for Employee Health Initiatives



Maricopa County

July, 2006

MIKE'S MESSAGE

Find it fast

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EHI Department Mission

The mission of the Employee Health Initiatives department is to provide competitive benefit programs and promote healthy lifestyle and wellness for employees so that Maricopa County can have a healthy and productive workforce.

We are living longer!

By Mike Schaiberger Administrator for Innovation

Many ancient stories, including religious literature, tell of mankind living 700, 800 years and older. Yet, in the 1840s, the average human had a life expectancy less than 45 years.

The good news is, according to UPI Senior Science Writer Lidia Wasowicz, lifespan "has been lengthening by 30 months every decade for the past 160 years. Based on historical trends since 1840 among the world's longest-lived populations, there has been a steady increase in life expectancy of 2.5 years per decade."

In a 2003 story, Wasowicz found heredity the predominant factor in how long a person lives. In other words, what the health of your parents and others in your family is predicts your general health.

She points out, beyond genetics, individuals have a hand in their own health. "Better health, sprouting from improved nutrition, increased exercise and diminished smoking and obesity, will contribute to a longer life, as will biomedical advances..."

The good news, according to Wasowicz, is "By 2030, a healthy 50-year-old might be look-

ing forward to a life span of 95..." According to CIGNA's WebMD, "good self-care helps slow or prevent many age-related problems. No matter when you start, a healthy lifestyle improves your quality of life and may extend lifespan."

Further, the CIGNA website states, "Health experts unanimously agree regular physical activity is key to healthy aging and physical independence." CIGNA says exercise helps keep the body strong and the mind moving.

"You can feel your best by avoiding practices that speed aging and trigger disease (such as a high-sodium and high-fat diet, smoking, heavy alcohol use, and drug abuse)," said CIGNA.

Maricopa County is concerned about its employees' wellness. In last month's Pulse, you read about "Blueprint for Wellness." Launched in May by the Employee Health Initiatives department to help the County fulfill its mission of promoting a healthy lifestyle and wellness for employees, the program is branching out to County worksites.

Also available are weight management classes, quit tobacco education, online health risk assessments and more. A healthy workforce helps us serve the citizens of our county.

CIGNA UPDATE

CIGNA garners J. D. Powers award for call center

Frank J. Benedetto, CIGNA HealthCare of Arizona's vice president of sales, recently announced that CIGNA HealthCare Member Services call centers are now J.D. Power and Associates certified call centers.

"I'm very excited that our primary call centers are recognized for providing an outstanding customer service experience," said Benedetto. "We are one of a select few companies in the nation to receive this certification!"

To attain certification, a call center must meet the J.D. Power and Associates' cross-industry customer satisfaction criteria. The criteria used include: evaluation of: courtesy; knowledge; concern for the customer; usefulness of the information provided; convenience of operating

hours; ease of reaching a representative; and timely resolution.

Nationally, CIGNA handles 20-million calls, faxes and emails annually from members.

"This is a tremendous achievement for our HealthCare call centers," said Benedetto. "The J.D. Power and Associates brand is well-known for denoting high quality and performance."



Do you have a giant exercise machine in your yard?

By Debbie Thompson

Senior Ergonomics/Human Factors Engineer

Most people think pools are for their children, pool parties, and to cool off and do not think of exercising in the pool unless they can swim laps. However, you can perform a very beneficial exercise routine in your small backyard pool!

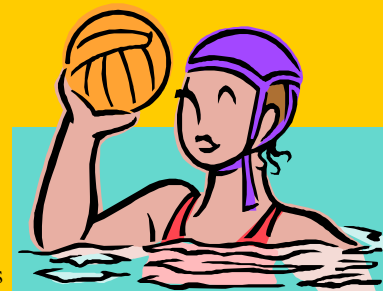


The benefits of aquatic water exercise are fantastic:

- Water resistance is 10 times that of air. You get more “bang for your buck.”
- You burn more fat and calories in water.
- Excellent muscle balance occurs when weaker muscles are resisted and stronger muscles are assisted.
- Your stabilizer muscles are engaged at all times.
- The exercises are functional and specific to daily activities.
- Low impact on joints. Reduces pressure on joints by 50 to 70 percent.
- Minimizes stress on shoulders, hands, and arms.
- Water relaxes muscles and is fun.

Water Exercise is the number one choice for people with arthritis and joint conditions and doable for most.

As a trainer for the Arthritis Foundation, I teach instructors all levels of exercise for people with arthritis, which includes fibromyalgia. With arthritis, the person must listen to their body and be aware of pain that lasts for more than two hours after exercise, which could be a sign that you have overdone it. If this occurs, do fewer repetitions and reduce intensity during the next exercise session.



For more information, attend the upcoming “Aquatic Exercise Without Water I” class, on July 12 from noon to 1:30. Enroll through the EBC. Go to Index at the top of the page. In the pulldown box, under training homepage, click on course catalog. Look for Course PED142, “Aquatic Exercise Without Water I.” Click “select” to the left of the course number. This will transfer you to Course Detail. At the upper right hand of the screen, click Add This Course To My Training Plan. From there, fill in your nine digit Employee ID, and the first four letters of your last name. Click “OK.”

So the next time you look at your pool, visualize a “giant exercise machine;” and remember to do your pool exercises before your pool party.

Building team relationships at work

By Betty Knight

Financial Administrator

Our success as a team in EHI is because we all care about our relationships with each other. Recently I found an interesting article that I apply at work. I hope you find it helpful.

Relationships are important to a good team. Damage can affect not only the two persons involved but also the environment for everyone.

You know you have a damaged relationship that you care about when the little voice in your head won't go away. The best time to fix it is right away. If you don't do something to fix it, you will start acting out your feelings. You may start slinging “subtle judgmental non-verbals” or gossiping. There are many ways your psyche will betray your feelings.

You start telling yourself stories. A clever story is what we tell ourselves to

justify our own silence or violence and feel good about it.

Primarily I'm worried about the stories that keep us from speaking up such as, “They'll just get upset if I bring that up,” or “They should be apologizing to me; I did nothing wrong,” or “Time will cure this; I'll just wait for five or six years.”

In order to overcome our stories, we need to assault them with questions.

The three we teach in Crucial Conversations are:

- Why would a reasonable, rational, and decent person do this?
- Am I pretending not to notice my role in the problem?
- What can I do right now to get what I really want for me, for the other person, and for our relationship?

The answers to these questions help us control our emotions and overcome

our unwillingness to speak up.

Try this to start a conversation: “Could we talk about our relationship? It seems like we've not been working together as effectively recently as we have been in the past. I very much want to have a good relationship. I may have done some things wrong. I have some observations I'd like to share and questions I'd like to ask. I think it would help if we could talk. Would that be okay?”

Of course, there are exceptions, but most of the time improvements occur when you honestly and respectfully address a problem.

Time and silence heal almost nothing. What leads to improvement is safe, caring dialogue.

Taken from an article from Crucial Conversations written by Al Switzler May 31, 2006, Volume 4 Issue 21.

Brand name statin generic may save you money

Q. WHAT IS THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE WAY TO MANAGE MY HIGH CHOLESTEROL?

If you are taking a brand-name statin (cholesterol-lowering) medication, you might be able to save money without compromising on quality. Check with your doctor about the possibility of switching your prescription to a generic alternative so you can save money on your copayments.

Two brand-name statins, Pravachol® (pravastatin) and Zocor® (simvastatin), are now available as lower cost generic medications.

A generic medication is a chemically identical version of a brand-name medication approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. This means you get both quality and cost savings, because generic prices are on average 20 to 50 percent less than their brand-name counterparts. In addition,



tion, the copay amount for generics is generally less than for brand names.

Your choice of generics can help you keep your insurance premiums low and

benefits high. Log on to mywhi.com to check for cost saving generics on your plan's Preferred Medication List.

Drug names are the property of their respective owners.

DISCLAIMER: *The information provided is not a substitute for medical advice. Consult your doctor for diagnosis and treatment of your medical condition. Advances in medicine may cause this information to become outdated, invalid or subject to debate. Professional opinions and interpretations of the scientific literature may vary.*

Walgreens Health Initiatives terms of use and general warranty disclaimer apply to all services provided. If you are in need of immediate medical attention, contact your physician, poison control center or emergency medical professional. If you need to speak with a pharmacist for nonemergency matters, contact your local pharmacist.

Walgreens Health Initiatives
mywhi.com

Maricopa County taking proactive stance in rising pharmaceutical costs

**By Art Marcello
Benefit Management Analyst**

Pharmaceutical industry trends dictate the need for employer and employee awareness and intervention to continue to provide a cost-efficient, high quality pharmacy program, according to Walgreens Health Initiatives and Buck Consultants, a national benefits consulting firm.

The prescription drug future is an economic landscape that includes cost drivers employers, including Maricopa County, need to address. Examples of cost drivers are inflation, new products, alternate uses for existing medicines and more patients.

Prescription drug costs have doubled over the past five years and are expected to double again over the remainder of the decade. Currently, pharmaceuticals represent about 20 percent of total healthcare costs nationally, and are growing.

Drug price inflation is running at 3 to 6 percent per year. CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services)

projects the average annual rate of prescription drug spending will grow at approximately 10.2 percent annually through 2014.

Most cost drivers and market influences are outside the employer's control. As we live longer, we require more medical and pharmaceutical care. An aging workforce, greater obesity and poor health add to an employer's healthcare costs. New, expensive drugs (without a generic alternative) entering the marketplace, including anti-infective, cardiovascular, endocrine/anticancer, gastrointestinal, asthma/allergy, specialty/biotech and lifestyle drugs also add to employer's healthcare costs.

Some expensive brand name drugs are anticipated to go generic between 2006 and 2009. Examples include, 2006 (pravachol, zolof, zocor, lamisil, ambien); 2007 (zyrtex, norvasc, depakote, provigil, topol XL); 2008 (effexor XR, fosamax, sonata); and 2009 (imitrex). There is also a changing philosophy of cancer treatment as

maintenance therapy and more direct-to-consumer advertising impact.

In order to compensate for the changing pharmacy landscape, Maricopa County will continue utilizing management programs such as wellness programs, health education, disease management, step-therapy, retrospective and concurrent drug utilization review and prior authorization. It is important to continue to look at the prescription drug program as an investment.

In summary, because of the pharmaceutical industry projected cost escalation, inflation, and the increasing importance of vendor data and reporting for management decision-making, Maricopa County will continue its proactive employer involvement to meet future demands of this constantly changing environment. Employees will continue to be informed of how they can best take full advantage of the Pharmacy programs available to them to decrease their pharmaceutical costs.

Who says there's no such thing as a free lunch?



By Lindsey Grantham
Wellness Coordinator

What would \$10 get you – lunch, a few gallons of gas for your vehicle or about five pounds of skinless, boneless chicken breast at the grocery store for that healthy lifestyle diet?

Any Maricopa County employee, as well as their spouse covered under a County medical plan, is eligible for a \$10 American Express gift card for taking the WebMD HealthQuotient™ Health Risk Assessment at myCIGNA.com your first time. Use the assessment to identify and monitor your personal health status; obtain a personalized analysis of many preventable and common conditions; review details of your contributing risk factors; and access recommended steps for improvement, interactive tools and wellness information.

To take the Health Risk assessment, if you are NOT a registered member of myCIGNA.com:

- Go to www.myCIGNA.com
- Click Register Now button.



- Enter identifying information.
 - Click Register.
 - Continue with the steps below.
- To take the Health Risk Assessment if you are a registered myCIGNA.com member:
- Go to www.myCIGNA.com
 - Enter your User ID and password.

- Click Health Resources/WebMD link at the top of the page.

- Then, click on the Health Risk Assessment link under the heading WebMD Health Tools and Resources.

To obtain the American Express gift card, print the last page of the Health Risk Assessment questionnaire showing the assessment was completed and attach it to the "Request for Health Risk Assessment Incentive Award" form available on the EBC at the Benefits Home Page. <http://ebc.maricopa.gov/ehi/>

Then send the form and last page of the HRA to Employee Health Initiatives department, 301 W. Jefferson St., Suite 201, Phoenix, AZ 85003, or fax to (602) 506-2354.



WELLNESS ROUNDUP

Weight Watcher "At Work"

The Weight Watchers "At Work" Program has its highest number of participants ever, with 71 employees enrolled, for the session that began May 24.

This 10-week session marks the second session Maricopa County is providing employees a \$110 American Express gift card for attending eight classes and losing 10 pounds through the "Waisting Away" program incentive.

EHI is currently evaluating adding more classes in the downtown area and other County government locations to meet the demands for the Weight Watchers "Waisting Away" program. Details will be announced in Pulse and e*Nouncements.

Employees and dependents covered under a County medical insurance plan are eligible for the incentive and may attend Weight Watchers classes in the community to qualify.

Lunch-N-Learns

Two Lunch-N-Learns are scheduled for July.

July 18, 1001 N. Central Ave. and July 25, 2901 W. Durango St., both at noon, Dr. Ross Kerievsky, from Naturopathic Family Care, speaking on acupuncture.

Naturopathic Family Care is an in-network provider with CIGNA for Alternative Medicine and chiropractic care.

Blueprint For Wellness™

Following its pilot in early May, Blueprint For Wellness™ is back with expanded locations!

Blueprint For Wellness™ is a comprehensive blood test and health risk assessment conducted in conjunction with Walgreens Health Initiatives and Quest Labs.

Blueprint For Wellness™ includes a free full cholesterol (lipid) panel and blood sugar (glucose) blood test to help determine individual health risks for employees covered by a County medical plan. For an added fee, more extensive testing, including liver, thyroid and kidney function assessments, testing for potential prostate cancer indicators and coronary artery disease are performed.

This is an EHI wellness program

designed to assist Maricopa County employees live healthy.

Testing will be done: July 18: 301 W. Jefferson St., Phoenix, from 7 to 10 a.m., also July 19 and 20 2801 W. Durango St., Phoenix, from 7 to 10 a.m.

To register, or for more information, contact Wellness Coordinator, Lindsey Grantham, 602-506-3758.

Quit Tobacco Program

For those seeking to end tobacco use, the Quit Tobacco Program started a new class June 6th at 301 W. Jefferson St., and new sessions begin every six weeks. Classes are offered Tuesdays from 12 to 1 p.m. and at various community locations.

To register for future classes, contact Public Health at 602-372-7272. Nicotine Replacement Therapy (lozenge, gum and patches) is offered at 50 percent of the cost and Zyban is offered at no cost to employees and dependents covered under a County medical plan. If the participant completes the class and quits using tobacco, the 50 percent paid for the NRT is reimbursed.

Mobile Onsite Mammography

M.O.M. will be at several County locations in July.

July 12

5th Ave. and Jefferson St., 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

July 13

222 Javelina Ave., 8 to 11 a.m.

2801 W. Durango St., 1 to 5 p.m.

July 14

1001 N. Central Ave., 8 to 11 a.m.

5th Ave. and Jefferson St., 1 to 5 p.m.

To make appointments, call: 480-967-3767

Pilates and Yoga

Pilates and Yoga are still being offered Tuesdays and Thursdays for a nominal fee. Classes are walk-in friendly at \$6 per session or a package of 10 sessions costs \$40.00. Questions regarding these classes may be directed to Demi, the instructor, at 623-849-9416.

CIGNA Wellaware for better health

CIGNA offers Wellaware for Weight Complications, a program to help understand how excessive weight may cause severe health risks.

Personalized support and a wide

selection of educational materials and tools are available through CIGNA to help improve your health and well being.

A team of registered nurses and other clinicians are available to provide personalized support.

For more information, or if you are interested in enrolling, call CIGNA's Wellaware at 866-797-5833. This program is available free to employees and their qualified dependents who are covered under a County medical plan and who have a body mass index of 30 percent or above.

Getting more ZZZZs may improve work productivity

Researchers have discovered a treatment that improves memory, increases people's ability to concentrate, strengthens the immune system, and decreases people's risk of being killed in accidents. The treatment is completely free.

For most people, the treatment would consist of getting an extra 60 to 90 minutes of sleep each night. Psychologists and psychiatrists have argued for years that one of the most significant and overlooked public health problems in the U.S. is that many American adults are chronically sleep deprived.

Laboratory experiments on the effects of sleep deprivation have shown that failing to get enough sleep dramatically impairs memory and concentration while increasing levels of stress hormones; disrupting the body's normal metabolism. Research outside the laboratory further suggests



A lack of sleep taxes the immune system, and may even lead to disease and premature aging. To make all of this worse, most people who are sleep deprived do not even realize it. If you get sleepy during long meetings or long drives, chances are you are chronically sleep deprived.

that long term sleep deprivation leads to greater susceptibility to motor vehicle accidents and may even lead to premature aging. People who chronically fail to get enough sleep may actually be cutting their lives short.

Estimates by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration indicate that drowsy or fatigued driving leads to more than 100,000 motor vehicle crashes per year. Even small disruptions in sleep can wreak havoc on human safety and performance.

For example, in a nation-wide study of motor vehicle accidents occurring between 1986 and 1995, psychologist Stanley Coren studied the effects of the single hour of lost sleep that many Americans experience when they set their clocks forward every spring. The result? A 17 percent increase in traffic deaths on the Mondays following the time changes (compared with the Mondays before).

It is harder to estimate the toll sleep deprivation takes on people's health, happiness, and productivity, but according to the National Sleep Foundation, the annual cost in lost worker productivity due to sleeplessness is about \$18 billion dollars.

Original article at:

<http://www.psychologymatters.org/sleep.html>

Diversity lessons from the EBC

Searching for ways of achieving diversity in your department? Search no farther than Maricopa County's own "EBC" intranet site. At <http://ebc.maricopa.gov/management/ee2002/ee2002/0602/050602.htm> is an article by William A. Guillory, CEO of Innovations International, an authority on diversity, empowerment, leadership, creativity, and spirituality. He is the author of *The Living Organization*.

Guillory lists "nine key lessons" for ensuring a successful diversity process.

Nine Key Lessons

1. If a belief of "people are our most-valued resource" already exists, the diversity process moves faster.



2. Leaders' vision, commitment, and participation is more powerful than any written statement.
3. Sustaining diversity activities during hard times sends a clear message of commitment. Diversity is founded upon values that include freedom, equality, and fairness.

4. Involving middle managers is key to implementing a diversity plan.
 5. Integrating diversity into mainline processes ensures its long-term success. Strategic planning, succession planning, executive development, work processes, and business roles benefit from diversity.
 6. Unless the diversity objectives are specific, definable, and measurable, there is no clear destination. "What gets measured gets done!"
 7. Diversity is a long-term commitment. Commitment must be sustained as the torch is passed from one leader to another.
 8. Diversity actions will fail unless an existing infrastructure is used—or a new one is established.
 9. In the mature stages, the diversity process becomes unique to each organization.
- When these lessons become part of your unique process, the fears and resistance to diversity fall away. More diversity lessons are available on the EBC. From the EBC homepage, click on *search* at the top of the page. When the search page appears, type in *diversity*. Many listings will appear.



Generation at Risk for Periodontal Disease

As baby boomers enter their 60s this year, oral health professionals encourage them to increase awareness on the dangers of periodontal or gum disease.

"Most people are keeping their teeth throughout their lifetime, yet gum disease is still a problem. It's important for baby boomers to pay increased attention to their oral health just as they are other areas of their well-being," said Ed Schooley, DDS, a national oral health advisor for Delta Dental Plans Association.

Gum disease typically develops when plaque — the naturally occurring, bacteria-harboring mucus on teeth — is allowed to build up along and under the mouth's gum line until it hardens into tartar. Symptoms of gum disease include bad breath; red,

swollen, tender or bleeding gums; painful chewing; and sensitive teeth. At advanced stages, gum disease can lead to a loosening, then loss of, teeth.



An estimated 80 percent of American adults currently have some form of gum disease.

While it's not merely age that encourages the onset of gum disease, the accumulated effects of lifestyle and genetic factors such as smoking, hormonal changes, diabetes, stress, medications and illnesses can all have negative impacts on the health of gums.

Oral health experts say the time-tested strategy of brushing with fluoride toothpaste twice a day and flossing every day is a great start.

Utilizing your dental benefits to visit the dentist routinely for a check-up and professional cleaning is also critical in watching gum disease. Tweaking personal habits such as eating a well-balanced diet and avoiding the use of tobacco products also contributes to better overall health.

If you haven't been to the dentist in the last twelve months, make an appointment for an annual dental exam which includes a periodontal screening. The earlier gum disease is diagnosed, the easier (less invasive and less expensive) it is to treat.

Dental exams are a covered benefit under your dental benefit plan.

Take a Self-Evaluation Quiz

You may not realize that persistent swollen, red or bleeding gums, tooth sensitivity, and bad breath are warning signs of periodontal (gum) disease – a serious infection that, left untreated, can lead to tooth loss.

Jot down your answers to the following questions to find out if you have the symptoms of periodontal disease.

- ⇒ Do you ever have pain in your mouth?
- ⇒ Do your gums ever bleed when you brush your teeth or when you eat hard food?
- ⇒ Have you noticed any spaces developing between your teeth?
- ⇒ Do your gums ever feel swollen or tender?
- ⇒ Have you noticed that your gums are receding (pulling back from your teeth) or your teeth appear longer than before?
- ⇒ Do you have persistent bad breath?
- ⇒ Have you noticed pus between your teeth and gums?
- ⇒ Have you noticed any change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite?
- ⇒ Do you ever develop sores in your mouth?

Find Out More

If you have any of these symptoms of periodontal disease, take action to protect your gums and your health.

Learn about the causes, types and treatment of periodontal disease. Don't let periodontal disease take away your smile. If you answered yes to any of these questions, consult a periodontist right away – and help save your natural teeth!

If you've already lost a tooth to periodontal disease, you may be interested in dental implants – the permanent tooth replacement option. Source: American Academy of Periodontology.



How to keep dependents over 19 on benefits

You may be receiving a request from CIGNA requesting verification of dependent eligibility, if you are covering a dependent who is over age 19.

In order to continue coverage of your dependent, the requested documentation of either full-time student or handicapped status must be sent to CIGNA within 30 days from the date of the request. You should send the completed questionnaire and/or verification to the address indicated in the request. If verification is not received within that time, dependent coverage will be cancelled.

A copy of the questionnaire and supporting documentation must also be sent to the Employee Health Initiatives department at County Administration, 301 W Jefferson St., Suite 201, Phoenix, AZ 85003 at the beginning of **each** semester for students, or annually for handicapped children. Additionally, you should keep a copy for your records.

If your dependent no longer is eligible as a dependent, as specified in the next section, he/she may be eligible to continue health insurance coverage through COBRA or a conversion plan.

However, the EHI department must be notified within 30 days of losing eligibility to ensure your dependent does not lose his/her rights to continued coverage.

Qualified student/dependent

The following dependent child may be covered under the employee's health care coverage: the natural child, step-child, or adopted child of the employee or a child placed with the employee for adoption; or a child for whom the employee is the legal guardian.

The dependent must be unmarried; and reside with the employee for more than one-half of the taxable year (January – December); and

- a. Temporary absences due to school attendance do not violate this residency rule.
- b. Qualified Medical Child Support Orders or other court/administrative orders do not violate this residency rule.
- c. Your student dependent child will remain eligible during summer breaks from school provided that he/she will be attending school on a full-time basis

during the fall term/semester.

The dependent must be under age 19, or a full-time student and under age 25, or any age if permanently and totally disabled; and

- a. For a child 19 or older, to be deemed a full-time student, the school he/she attends must be an accredited institution for higher education. The school will define and determine full-time student status.
- b. For a child who is permanently and totally disabled, the child must have been medically certified as permanently and totally disabled prior to his/her 19th birthday (or prior to his/her 25th birthday if disabled while a full-time student).

There is no income limit that the dependent child can earn.

For children age 19 or under 24, the child must not have **provided** more than 1/2 of his/her support during the taxable year (January – December).

For children age 24, but under 25, the child must not have **received** more than 1/2 of his/her support during the taxable year (January – December) from the employee.

Classes scheduled to provide facts on retiring



By Victor Marino
Benefits Supervisor

Did you know the Employee Health Initiatives department offers online classes for retirees?

Carol Smith of Employee Health Initiatives teaches a class once a month to advise employees on retiree health insurance benefits.

The classes are available through Pathlore on the EBC training home page, Online Learning Center.

The next class, titled "Don't guess - get the facts! Retiring from Maricopa County," is scheduled July 13, from 9 to 11 a.m. The class code for registration is PED132B. The class will be held at the County Administration Building, 301 W.

Jefferson St., second floor, Test Rooms A and B, Phoenix.

Two other retirement classes are offered through the Online Learning Center home page. Class details:

Aug. 21, noon to 1 p.m., "Women and Retirement," offered by Nationwide Insurance, County Administration Building, 301 W. Jefferson St., 10th Floor, class code: PED189BA

Sept. 6, 9 to 11 a.m., "Retirement, ready or not!" offered by the Arizona State Retirement System, County Administration Building, 301 W. Jefferson St., 3rd Floor, class code: PER333

To enroll in these classes go to following address on the EBC: <http://pathlore.maricopa.gov/stc/student>.

Summer travel health safety tips

July and August are peak travel periods in the U.S. according to travel authorities.

Here are some health safety tips for air travel:

- Carry enough of all of your medicines in your carry-on luggage.
- Bring enough medicine to last your whole trip.
- Ask your doctor whether you should change your dosages if your eating and sleeping times will change at your destination.
- Have the name and phone number of your doctor with you in case of an emergency. Remember to bring along the names and dosages of all of your medicines.
- Take extra medicine with you in case your return trip is delayed.
- If you have diabetes or epilepsy, carry a notification and identification card.
- The air in airplanes is dry, so drink nonalcoholic, decaffeinated beverages and water to avoid becoming dehydrated.

What can I do about jet lag?

- Get plenty of sleep before you leave.
- Don't drink a lot of alcohol.
- Eat well-balanced meals.
- Avoid overeating.

- Exercise as much as you can on your trip.
- Use sleep medicines for only a few days.
- Get used to a new time zone by going along with the local meal and bedtime schedules.

What about pain in my ears? If your ears hurt when you fly, try taking a decongestant medicine (such as pseudoephedrine) before you get on the plane.

You can also swallow often and chew gum during the flight. Babies can suck on bottles or a pacifier during the flight.

Source: American Academy of Family Physicians.

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